Is This “Spiritualizing” the Text?

In the many ways the Scriptures can be interpreted, the only correct method is the literal-historical approach. That is, the interpreter must assume verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, that the writers were superintended by the Holy Spirit, that the biblical text is to be taken as literal until proved otherwise, that the text must be interpreted in light of the historical context, and that the interpreter must attempt to discern what was the author’s intent in writing the biblical text. Such are the principles of correct interpretation of Scripture.

To spiritualize the text is to apply a method of interpretation that implies that the true meaning of the text is hidden, and that the text means something other than what it appears to say on the surface. Similar to allegorization, spiritualizing the text states there is a mystical, hidden meaning to the text, something that goes beyond the literal-historical meaning, and that is the true and only correct interpretation of the text. It is a mystical approach to interpreting God’s Word.

Hearing God’s voice through His Word pertains only to application, not to interpretation. It is using the principles, the thoughts, and the words of Scripture to apply to an individual’s given situation. This is nothing new in Scripture. In fact, God expects the believer to apply the principles of His Word. John 14:21 states, “*He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me…*” God expects that those who say they love Jesus will apply His words to their lives and live accordingly.

Again, Galatians 6:7 states, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*” The Life Application Study Bible provides a general application:

“It would certainly be a surprise if you planted corn and pumpkins came up. It’s a natural law to reap what we sow. It’s true in other areas too. If you gossip about your friends, you will lose their friendship. Every action has results. If you plant to please your own desires, you’ll reap a crop of sorrow and evil. If you plant to please God, you’ll reap joy and everlasting life. What kind of seeds are you sowing?” (p. 2067).

The principles of hearing God’s voice through His Word is nothing more than enabling every believer to make his or her own personal application to life situations from God’s Word.

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